

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, as amended, still remain in this application and claim 11-17 are newly added.

The drawing have been amended to include the reference numerals 36 and 38. Applicant wishes to express gratitude to the Examiner for pointing out this inadvertent error. Of course, the amended drawing is being submitted contingent upon the Examiner's approval.

Before commenting on the specific rejections made by the Examiner, it is believed worthy of note to discuss the differences between the present invention and the cited reference (Close 3,711,901). While both structures include side edge slots and a hole and are formed on a planar extended main body, the structures differ materially and operate differently and incidently the Close structure is far more complex. To begin, the hole 23 in Close merely serves "for retaining the device thereon so that it will not be lost when the rope is loosened" (column 2, lines 19-20). The hole 23 of applicant's structure as a definite purpose in both the tightening of the rope and for coupling two ropes. The slot 40 in applicant's structure serves to receive both portions of the loop (or reach) and there is nothing that is shown in the Close structure that is comparable. Note that the rope is looped (the knot is not important) and the two portions of the loop fits into slot 40 and wraps around a post, cleat or the like and each portion of the loop is fitted into the diametrically opposed slots 20 & 22. This serves to secure one end of the rope. The other end of the rope is secured to another part so that the rope surrounds the load and then the rope is pulled taught and then wrapped around the slots 30, 32, and 34. This locks the rope in place. In Fig. 4 one can see that a bumper is secured to the end of the rope and the rope can then be pulled to a desired height to locate the bumper relative to the boat and dock. What is unique about this feature of the invention that the positioning of the bumper can be done with one hand. Where the wife of the boat is adjusting the bumper owner(as is the case of this inventor),

one can appreciate why the simplicity of this invention is important.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claim 1-5 and 7-9 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Close, *supra* is respectfully requested. As mentioned above the claim patentably distinguishes over this reference inasmuch as Close does not teach a slot that is adapted to receive the opposing portions of a loop. The slot 15 purported to be adjacent the hole 23 does not accept both portions of the loop. The claims have been amended to recite that this slot is intermediate the bottom edge and the top edge and is between the top edge and the hole 23. As mentioned in the earlier paragraph the Close device does not function and operate the way that the present invention operates. In the Fig. 4 (Close) embodiment the rope is tied to the recess 19. This is nothing like the present invention. When the rope is tightened it is made taut by rotating the device and inserting the rope in hook 16 and then lifting the rope so that it fits into locking hook 17. There is nothing like that in the present invention and these teachings are entirely different therefrom. The hole 23 of Close need not be utilized to secure the rope. It is there merely to assure that the device doesn't get lost when the rope is loosened. The rope of Close does not teach helically wound as is the case in the present invention. The elements 17 and 19 of Close are not opposing slots. Element 17 is a locking hook and element 19 is a notch. Entirely unlike Applicants slots 20 and 22 and serve an entirely different function. The end notches 15 of Close are entirely different from the diametrically opposed slots 20 and 22. These notches along with the indented portion of the body 12 serve as a spool to wind up the excessive portion of the rope. There is nothing in the present invention that is comparable to this feature. Applicant's opposing slots 20 and 22 serve to assist in locking one end of the rope. This is not the case of the notches 15 of Close. As the Examiner must know, the cited reference must teach the identical subject matter and have the identical elements in order to be used to reject the claims under section 102.

Furthermore claim 2 patentably distinguishes from Close as it recites that the diametrically opposing slots 20 and 22 are oriented so that the slots face toward the top edge. Where in Close is there anything resembling this limitation?

Claim 3 further patentably distinguishes from Close inasmuch as this claim is limited to having each of the slots 30, 32 and 34 extend to the center line.

Claim 5 recites radii, not to be found in Close.

Claim 7 recites the top edge and bottom edge are contoured, not to be found in Close. It is respectfully submitted that the slots of Close end adjacent to the axial depression

Claims 11-17 are added herein to positively recite the features that allow the present invention to be a coupling device for coupling two ropes together. The prior art indicates that this feature is patentably distinct and hence, is believed worthy of patent coverage.

The term "drilled" has been deleted inasmuch as the unit is cast and this nomenclature may infer a different and more limited meaning. This is obvious from the specification and is not deemed new matter.

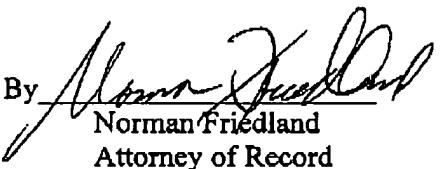
Applicant does not predicate patentability on the means for placing indicia on applicant's inventive device. It is respectfully submitted that inasmuch as the Close reference is not pertinent with respect to claims 1-5 and 7-9, it is likewise not pertinent to claims 6 and 10. Hence, it is believed that the § 103 (a) rejection does not apply and should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed this application is in condition for allowance and the allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectively submitted,

KEITH E. SHERMAN et al

By


Norman Friedland
Attorney of Record
(Reg. No. 20,070)

Norman Friedland
2855 PGA Boulevard
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33408
(561) 626-4111
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